

Summary

1996 State Board of Health Meeting Testimony Related to Wireless Communication Facilities

During the June 1996 State Board of Health (SBOH) meeting, several Island County residents testified before the Board with concerns related to electromagnetic radiation exposure from wireless communication facilities. They were specifically concerned about:

- the effects of low-level non-thermal exposures;
- the problem of siting towers in residential neighborhoods;
- the degree of public participation afforded during the siting process;
- the problem of tower operators complying with emission standards; and
- the possibility of conducting monitoring of tower emissions to ensure better compliance by operators.

In response to this testimony, the SBOH invited Patti Waller, the Department of Health's lead epidemiologist on electromagnetic radiation exposure to provide an overview of the science surrounding wireless technology as it relates to health. She spoke to the Board in July 1996 about:

- the health effects from radio frequency exposure;
- the role of the federal government in regulating the wireless industry;
- the 1996 state legislation that designated DOH the lead state agency on this subject; and
- several local controversies related to the siting of telecommunication facilities.

In September 1996, the Board heard extensive in-depth testimony from a panel of experts on the health effects of electromagnetic radiation emitted from telecommunication facilities. The panelists included:

- Samuel Milham, MD., MPH DOH Senior Epidemiologist, Retired
- Henry Lai, PhD, Research Associate Professor, Center for Bioengineering, University of Washington
- Michael Yost, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Health, UW School of Public Health and Community Medicine
- Mays Swicord, PhD, Director of Biological Research, Motorola (via telephone)
- Paymond Neutra, MD, Dr. PH, Acting Chief, Division of Environmental and Occupational Disease Control and Chief, EMF Program, California State Department of Health Services (via telephone)

No Board action followed this testimony.